



# Archived Information



## 2007 GULF COAST SUMMER READING INITIATIVE

APRIL 2007

### Overview and Purpose

The **2007 Gulf Coast Summer Reading Initiative** involves the U.S. Department of Education's distribution of 500,000 new books—donated to the Department's partner First Book by Scholastic Inc. — to students, families, schools and libraries in communities across the five Gulf States (Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Alabama, and Florida) most affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. In support of the 2007 Gulf Coast Summer Reading Initiative, the Education Department, in conjunction with First Book and Scholastic Inc., will stage **five public events**, one in each of the affected states, to announce the availability and subsequent distribution of the books (100,000 per state).

The **Initiative** is the current phase of a yearlong Gulf Coast book-distribution effort created by the Education Department and First Book to support the latter's *Book Relief*, a broad-scale initiative to donate five million books to communities directly impacted by the hurricanes of 2005. Including this effort, the Education Department and First Book will have collaborated over the last year to distribute **1.15 million** books to Gulf Coast communities through *Book Relief*.

The media events, which will take place between April and early June 2007 and will involve senior staff from the Education Department, representatives from First Book and Scholastic, state and local dignitaries, school leaders, and students, will convey the Department's message about the importance of reading—especially over the summer months—and reinforce the Department and Administration's commitment to the rebuilding and revitalization of the Gulf Coast. The actual distribution of the 500,000 books earmarked for the Initiative will occur in two phases between May and early July, with First Book serving as the source for identifying key recipient groups (schools, libraries CBOs)—and generating subsequent mailing lists—and the Department conducting fulfillment through its EDPUBS distribution center.

The five event locations and venues planned for **Gulf Coast Summer Reading Initiative** are as follows:

**April 18:** Gulfview-Charles Murphy Elementary School, Kiln, Mississippi

**May 3:** Allie Yniestra Elementary School, Pensacola, Florida

**May 8:** Franklin Elementary School, Port Arthur, Texas

**May 14:** Andrew Jackson Elementary School, Chalmette, Louisiana

**June 5:** City of Bayou La Batre Public Library, Bayou La Batre, Alabama

### Key Partners

#### First Book

Founded in 1992, First Book is a nonprofit organization with a single mission: to give children from low-income families the opportunity to read and own their first new books. The organization provides an ongoing supply of new books to children participating in community-based mentoring, tutoring, and family literacy programs. First Book's model is national in scope and local in impact. In their first year, First Book distributed approximately 12,000 books in three communities. Since that time, First Book has distributed more than 46 million books to children in thousands of communities across the country.

Within days of Katrina's landfall, First Book launched *Book Relief*— an unprecedented effort to provide 5 million new books to the children and families who lost so much in the 2005 hurricanes and to organizations rebuilding the Gulf Coast. Book Relief has already distributed nearly four million new books in the five Gulf States and to programs serving evacuees in an additional 16 states. For more information, visit [www.firstbook.org](http://www.firstbook.org)

## Scholastic

Scholastic Inc., which is donating 500,000 brand-new children's books in support of the Department and First Book's 2007 Gulf Coast Summer Reading Initiative, is the largest publisher and distributor of children's books in the world. Consistent with the Initiative's purpose of supporting Gulf Coast recovery and relief, Scholastic's corporate efforts in this area center on their Rebuilding for Learning initiative. Rebuilding for Learning is a long-term recovery effort to support schools and educators in Gulf Coast communities. One element of that effort is the Scholastic My Time, A Box for Comfort and Fun™ kit for children (K-6) affected by disasters or crisis situations. Kits will be featured at each of the five media events and made available to the public as part of the Initiative. For more information, visit [www.scholastic.com/mytime](http://www.scholastic.com/mytime)

## The Gulf Coast Book Donation Campaign

The U.S. Department of Education and First Book joined forces in June 2006 to launch a multi-stage [Gulf Coast book distribution campaign](#) through the *Book Relief* initiative. With this partnership, First Book secured the necessary donations from publishers and wholesalers, and the Education Department managed all of the event planning as well as the storage, distribution, and related costs of the book donations. Prior to the 2007 Initiative, the campaign has included public announcement events and subsequent distributions in three stages:

**The 2006 Gulf Coast Summer Reading Initiative**, which in June 2006 brought 250,000 books to the Gulf Coast and was celebrated with public media events at the Theodore Johns Public Library in Beaumont, Texas; the Boys and Girls Club of the Gulf Coast Forest Heights Unit, located at the North Gulfport 7th and 8th Grade School in Gulfport, Mississippi; and at Belle Chasse Primary School in Plaquemines Parish, Belle Chasse, Louisiana.

August's (2006) **Back to School Book Donation** announced another 200,000 books distributed throughout the Gulf Coast with school-based media events at Delisle Elementary School in Pass Christian, Mississippi and at Andrew Jackson Elementary School in St. Bernard Parish, Chalmette, Louisiana.

In December 2006, the **Gulf Coast Holiday Book Donation**, which was launched with public media events at Combre-Fondel Elementary School in Lake Charles, Louisiana and at the Bay St. Louis-Hancock County Library in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, celebrated another 200,000 books distributed through ED and First Book's partnership.

**Including the 2007 donation, the Education Department and First Book will have collaborated to distribute 1.15 million books through *Book Relief*.**